

time, Marshal Blücher nevertheless undertook to receive the assault of the French at Ligny, relying upon receiving assistance from the British army, who, by a flank movement to the left, were to form a junction with the Prussians. As two distinct battles took place upon this day (the 16th) it is necessary to give a separate account of each.<sup>1</sup>

Early on the morning of the 16th the French army,<sup>2</sup> about 78,000 strong, appeared on the plain of Fleurus, driving before them the Prussian light troops into the valley of Ligny. Having reconnoitred the Prussian position Napoleon instantly formed the plan of cutting off the retreat of a great portion of Blücher's army, hoping by so decided an advantage over half the Allied troops in Belgium to be able to overwhelm with his whole force the army of Wellington. In taking this determination he was doubtless influenced by the consideration that Ney's reserve in position at Frasnes, which was somewhat in rear of the Prussians, would be available for his purpose, as he supposed that the Marshal had sufficient force to drive the British from Quatre Bras. Had this manoeuvre completely succeeded the ruin of Blücher's army would have ensued. Napoleon, confident of success, then directed the attack. Marshal Grouchy was ordered to attack Sombref on the right, Gérard<sup>3</sup> the village of Ligny in the centre, and

<sup>1</sup> There is the usual difficulty about the strength of the armies at Ligny. Thiers (tome xx. pp. 79 and 83) gives Napoleon 64,000 and Blücher 88,000; Dorsey Gardner (p. 94) gives Napoleon 71,000, including the corps of Lobau, some 11,000 men, which was not employed, and Blücher 84,000; while Prince Edouard d'Auvergne, who appears to wish to be fair, gives (*Waterloo*, p. 110) Napoleon 78,000, including Lobau, and Blücher 87,000. Jomini (tome iv. pp. 625, 626) calls Napoleon's force 72,000, and Blücher's from 80,000 to 90,000. Napoleon had 210 guns, besides Lobau's 38 pieces, and Blücher had 224 guns. Practically we may say that Napoleon, using from 60,000 to 68,000 men, drove Blücher and some 84,000 men out of a chosen position. "Sixty thousand in all," says the Prince d'Auvergne (*Waterloo*, p. 140), "had beaten 87,000 who had rested on six large villages," four of which, difficult of access, formed the bastions of their line of battle. The enemy, notwithstanding the advantages of their position, had suffered considerable loss: from 18,000 to 20,000 men, dead or wounded, were struck down, and we had in our hands 40 guns, 8 standards or colors, several thousands of prisoners. Twelve thousand men besides disbanded themselves." The desertions from the Prussians — 8,000, says Siborne (p. 188), — were of troops from the provinces lately annexed

to the kingdom, who apparently did not realize the joy of  
being restored to  
German rule. This is one side of the " German uprising."  
<sup>2</sup> Called by Jomini (tome iv, pp. 626, 627) a detestable one.  
<sup>8</sup> General Comte Maurice Etienne Gerard, who  
commanded a corps in this campaign, and who was severely  
wounded under Grouchy on the 18th of